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Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 1 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you with reference to the ninth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

Under item 4 of the agenda for that meeting, an analysis of progress made on the "assessment of assessments" of the state of the marine environment, provided for in General Assembly resolution 60/30, was carried out on 26 June 2008.

The representatives of the Ad Hoc Steering Group (see para. 92 of resolution 60/30) and the United Nations Environment Programme were responsible for submitting the progress report. They presented an unnumbered document entitled "Assessment of Assessments-Progress Report-20 June 2008", annex B of which included a table of ocean regions, with the "South West Atlantic Ocean" listed under number 19. The United Kingdom was included among the coastal States for this region, inferring a reference to the Malvinas Islands.

The Argentine Republic rejects the content of the document in question and, in particular, the attempt made by its authors to consider the Malvinas Islands as a possession of the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom as a coastal State in the South Atlantic.

The Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas are an integral part of the Argentine national territory and, being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, are the subject of a sovereignty dispute between the two countries which is recognized by a number of international organizations.

In that connection, the General Assembly of the United Nations has adopted resolutions 2065 (XX), 3160 (XXVIII), 31/49, 37/9, 38/12, 39/6, 40/21, 41/40, 42/19 and 43/25, recognizing the existence of a sovereignty dispute relating to the Malvinas Islands and urging the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to resume negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the dispute.

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The Special Committee on Decolonization, for its part, has made repeated statements to the same effect, most recently in the resolution adopted on 12 June 2008. The General Assembly of the Organization of American States also adopted a new declaration on the question of the Malvinas Islands, worded in similar terms, on 3 June 2008.

The Argentine Republic requests that all bodies involved in the "assessment of assessments" of the state of the marine environment pursuant to section XI of General Assembly resolution 60/30 take due account of the above.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present document under item 77 of the agenda of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Jorge **Argüello**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative